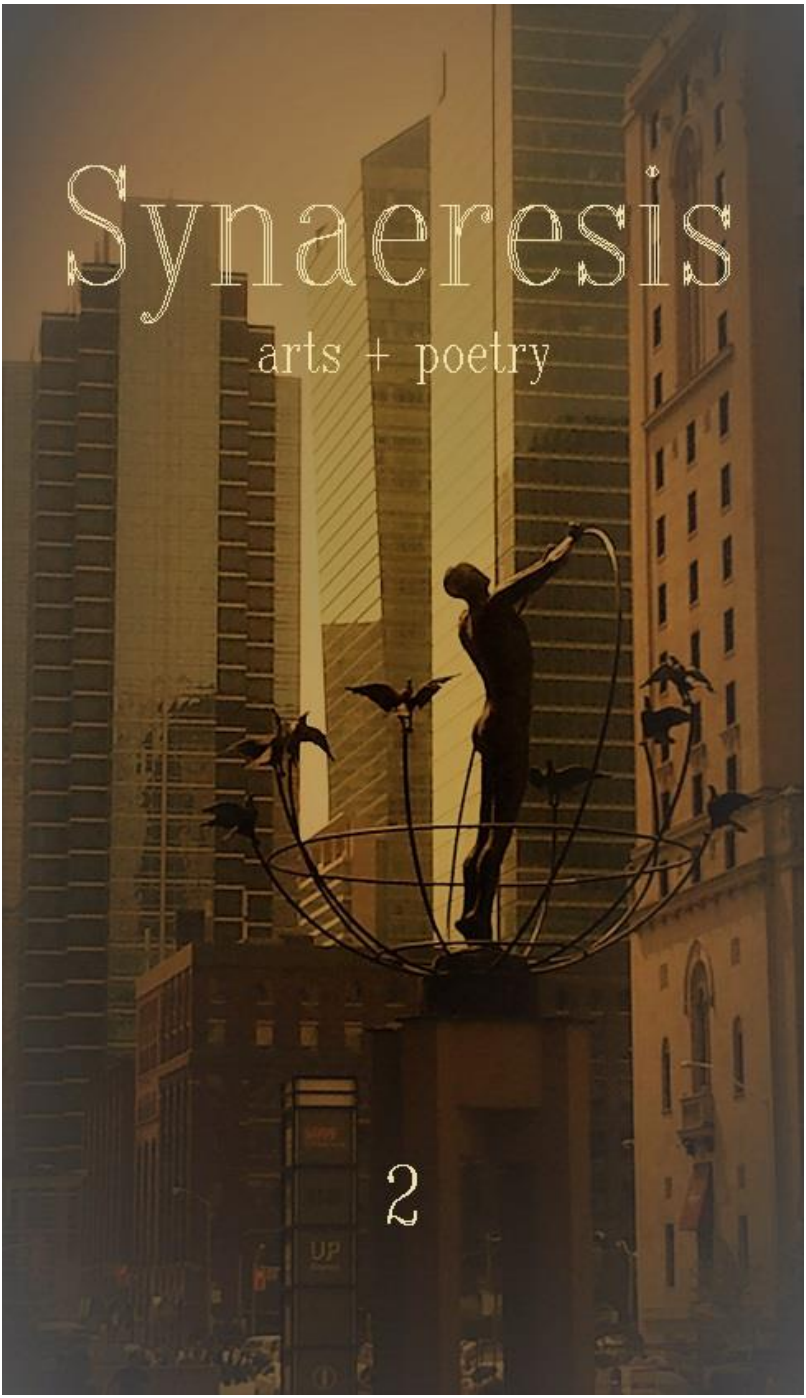
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arts + poetry
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CONTRIBUTOR	page
John Grey	1
Seth Jani	3
David Haskins	4
Brittany Renaud	7
Kenneth P. Gurney	10
Robert Beveridge	12
Jim Zola	14
Teresa Daniele	20
Lincoln McCardle	22
Stephenson Muret	23
Norma West Linder	26
Alan Leangvan	30
Brian Baker	32
Richard King Perkins II	36
M.J. Iuppa	38
Sergio A. Ortiz	39
Marcia Arrieta	42
Debbie Okun Hill	44
Joseph S. Pete	46
Emily Bowles	51
Nina Svenne	53
Lisa Young	54
Farrukh Chishtie	56

play me a song – Andreas Gripp

John Grey

The Russian Tales

The book is in Russian.
The old woman translates as she reads.
Tsars become kings,
tsarinas princesses.
The Steppes are a forest.
Wolves may continue to be wolves.
But her accent is untranslatable.
The sounds from her mouth
are not what the child hears all around her.

The stresses are all wrong.
Cadence is harsh.
Some words are lost altogether
in the gutter of her throat.
The little girl can't decide
if it's a dragon or a dragoon
that's blowing fire
at someone called Vladimir.
And is the hero riding for the palace
or the police.

The old woman
defected from the Soviet Union.
She risked her life
and those of her smuggled children.
That is the tale she's really telling.
She wraps it up in the gloss of fantasy.
But there's a lot of blood and fear,
panic, pain and despair,
in the way she speaks.
The child struggles to understand.
That just means she's hearing it right.

John Grey is an Australian poet, U.S. resident living in Rhode Island. Recently published in *New Plains Review, Stillwater Review* and *Big Muddy Review* with work upcoming in *Louisiana Review, Columbia College Literary Review* and *Spoon River Poetry Review.* His work frequently appeared in *Afterthoughts,* published by Harmonia Press from 1994-2000.

Seth Jani

Tunnel Vision

A steam-powered moon
Floats over the obsolete city.
In the fields around it
A woman made of chrome
Comes to a final conclusion.
The insects in her eyes
Are the only things
Not manufactured.
They have been waiting
To get out since the summers
Stopped ending.
She holds a wrench
Just beneath her eyelids,
Unscrews her pupils,
Slides her scleras out of place.
The fireflies drift through.
Her gaze is everywhere.

Seth Jani currently resides in Seattle, WA and is the founder of Seven Circle Press (www.sevencirclepress.com). His own work has been published widely in such places as *The Chiron Review, The Hamilton Stone Review, Hawai`i Pacific Review, VAYAVYA, Gingerbread House, Gravel* and *Zetetic: A Record of Unusual Inquiry.* www.sethjani.com

David Haskins

Things I Do to Miss You

park on my side of the driveway
sleep on my side of the bed
say “we” and “our house”
shop for more Pearl Bailey (pearl barley)
dry myself with your bath towel
turn down the tv so as not to wake you
leave your voice on the answering machine
leave your office door shut so as not to interrupt you
go in anyway to interrupt you
check my coins for your collectable quarters
wear your Haida key chain as a medallion
wear your two-rings charm on a gold chain
sand and stain the puzzle table
do your 1000-piece Christmas jigsaw
play your corny Christmas classics
hang your stocking from the mantle
fill the feeder to attract a cardinal
thank you when one comes

Communion

I come across a Mission in a southern state
near a nation whose gold was stolen
and faith imposed by ball and blade
The Spanish chapel looks like the Alamo
before it was shot apart
by John Wayne and the Mexican army

White-faced adobe walls house
empty pews and red cement paint
worn through by the soles of the pious
a garlanded Virgin mother and child
food on the table of the last supper
and cherubs wielding wands or playing banjos

Beneath a saint or a risen Christ
among the rows of votive candles
a single flame burns cranberry vigil
a woman prays in the sacred light

I choose to rest in the solace
of feast, mother, and penitent
and commune with my beloved
thankful she travels with me
to any foreign sanctuary

David Haskins' most recent book is a literary memoir *This House Is Condemned* (Wolsak & Wynn, 2013). His first book *Reclamation* (Borealis, 1980) is a collection of his early poems. He is widely published in literary journals (*Windsor Review, Fiddlehead, Canadian Forum, Journal of Canadian Fiction*), anthologies (*Saving Bannister, Voices from the Niagara*), and books (*Canadian Children's Annual, The Fruits of Experience*). His work won First Prizes from the CBC Short Story Competition, the Canadian Authors Association (Niagara), the Ontario Poetry Society, and three times from Arts Hamilton.

Brittany Renaud

Threadbare Identity

I was still in high school when I first bought you
for Canada’s brisk falls and looking
(what I thought was) cool,
but your leather is really polyurethane,
and your lining was one hundred percent polyester.
Years later,
the leather is flaking off around the cuffs
like white chipped paint off a tool shed long-abandoned
(like what's found upon my purse, which is second-hand
from the aunt of a friend),
the seams have burst along the elbow creases,
and the zipper is broken.
Is it noticeable?
I hope this unzipped leather jacket just adds to my cool,
which is does.
I clutch my worn-out elbows
and shiver.

There is at least one gem missing from this peplum shirt
I wear to nice-but-casual parties or interviews
(sometimes the empty setting scratches me).
I pull together a put-together look
thread by thread.

This denim I wear is from a male cousin.
They're starchy and stiff,
but they have big pockets and they seem the only pair
that doesn't share the ragged hems of the others
or did I throw them away with a weight gain?
I couldn't wear that pair of tights today
because after years of owning them,
only now,
have I noticed the sheen in which
they show off underwear
(not panties)
that were purchased with five others
in a plastic bag by my mother
longer ago still
than that leather jacket.

My work sneakers are so full of character
from over the years
that I feel I've done them a disservice
when I did not get a birth certificate with their purchase.
I'm surprised I haven't bashed in my head
on the warehouse floor's ceramics
with their lack of tread.
Or maybe instead the problem is too much tread.

These high heel shoes I quickly grew attached to
because I wore them to graduate university
had a strap snap only a few weeks after graduating.
I bought them cheaply, but I'll still wear them
until I can locate some shoe glue.

Most of the jewellery I own came from that same store
where so many favourite necklace clasps
have also snapped.
I've lost so many favourite earring backs.

And yet
I find myself baulking
at those who'll pay extra
for manufacturedly distressed jeans,
who tour vintage boutiques
like Goodwill and Salvation Army
to appear cobbled together artfully
in clothing not so gently
used.

You could trade with me.

Brittany Renaud is a recent graduate from Western University with a Bachelors Honour Specialization in Creative Writing, English Language and Literature and a Minor in Comparative Literature and Culture, and hopes to continue her pursuit of higher education in the near future. Brittany has been published in the *Another London* anthology and in the *Occasus Literary Journal* as well as being an active member of the London Open Mic and London Poetry Slam communities.

Kenneth P. Gurney

Winning Converts

Stillness saddles prayers
on the backs of coyote howls
to rise and nudge the stars into action.

When fire streaks across the night sky
we hope to hear it scream old testament fury,
but it winks out and vanishes in the backdrop.

Our enemies will not feel the wrath of god.
Will not be crushed by falling stone.
Will not turn to salt that spots this arid land.

By day, I dance long sun-beaten hours
with prayers written on my feet
to press back into the ground buffalo hooves.

The Natives laugh at us. Crazy albino Indian wannabes.
Psych ward refugees on faulty state budget release.
Slam poet losers seek a compelling cause.

Seven day testament demonstrates we are in earnest
and gathers a few native and migrant bystanders
to record the blood speckled dust we tramp.

Kenneth P. Gurney lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico with his beloved Dianne. His latest collection of poems is *Stump Speech* (2015). He runs the poetry blog *Watermelon Isotope.* His personal website is at kpgurney.me

Robert Beveridge

Firewater

The thirteenth man
sits at the table
with the rest, his face
in shadow. Like the others,
he is prayed over, anointed.
Somehow his boss
still ends up on the boards.

Cells are unworkable
only after the fact.
None exist; we had to covert
an atrium, block
the windows with newspaper,
paint the walls
with ground beef.

Word on the street is
his lawyer sold out
and fled to Manasseh
with twenty-five pieces of silver
and a lien on a left arm.

Some said naught was left
to prove; others
contended all was a lie.

The debate raged around cook-fires,
bowls of stew makeshift ammunition
for slingshots.

The whole camp ended up covered
in beef gravy, all of their eyes
pointed to the clouds
through which no stars,
feline or otherwise, shone.

Robert Beveridge makes noise (xterminal.bandcamp.com) and writes poetry just outside Cleveland, Ohio. Recent and upcoming appearances include *Cake, Grub Street,* and *The Literary Hatchet.*

Jim Zola

My Life as a Painter

An artist never really finishes his work,
he merely abandons it
– Paul Valery

He began on paper,
blue-lined, legal-sized,
then napkins, bills, receipts, scraps.
Soon the sentences flowed
to closet walls beneath
the glare of dim bulbs.
He had to shift old, worn-out
clothes, dusty baskets,
what hadn't been touched in years.
Then he moved to unlit corners,
cubbyholes crowded by stacks
of shoeboxes overflowing

with cancelled checks. The air smelled
dark and settled around him
like lazy cats. He wrote at night
by candlelight, and when the sun
was up and bright enough,
he opened the blinds.

Wallpaper and moulding
didn't slow him, he wrote
between the stems of hybrid
flowers, across shells and lumpy
bathroom fish, around windows
and doors. He littered floors

with dead pens and pencil stubs
too small for fingers' grip,
eraser tips unused.
He made it as far

as the stairwell in the back hall.
I was called in
to paint over it all.

Finding the 78

Your mother gave you a stack
of albums because you said *yes*
when she asked if you had
a record player. Thick ones,
heavy black like broken bits
of pure night sky - *The Lord's Prayer*;
Glenn Miller and Orchestra
do *Melancholy Baby* at 78.

You discover, inside the cover
for *The Passion According to St. Matthew*,
another record.
Eugene, June 3, 1950
written in blue ink on the label.
Your father's voice is like mud.

If you place your finger
on the turntable and spin it
faster, the voice almost makes sense.
Still, there are no words.
It’s like a dream. No matter
what the danger, your legs don't work.
You have no legs. You can't wake.

Open your eyes. There are branches
where ceiling should be. You hear
voices in another room.
Your father always said if he
came back it would be as a bird.
Look in the highest branch.
He is singing.

Mother

Mother's shape was pear
and stoic. Anger steamed
inside her jaw.
Kitchen thunder
signalled all to stay away.

Father conducted
dinner conversations,
teasing until we teared.
Ravenous in our ignorance,
we morphed to long faced teens

who knew everything
but only snorted in retort.
When they told me
she was going in
for testing, I was fourteen.

That first night, we ate
in silence. What did I know?
Father told us nothing.

When I found the foam cone
breast in her bedroom,
I held it in my palm.

Jim Zola has worked in a warehouse, as a security guard, in a bookstore, as a teacher for Deaf children, as a toy designer for Fisher Price, and currently as a children's librarian. His publications include a chapbook, *The One Hundred Bones of Weather* (Blue Pitcher Press) and a full length poetry collection, *What Glorious Possibilities* (Aldrich Press). He currently lives in Greensboro, North Carolina.

untitled – Teresa Daniele

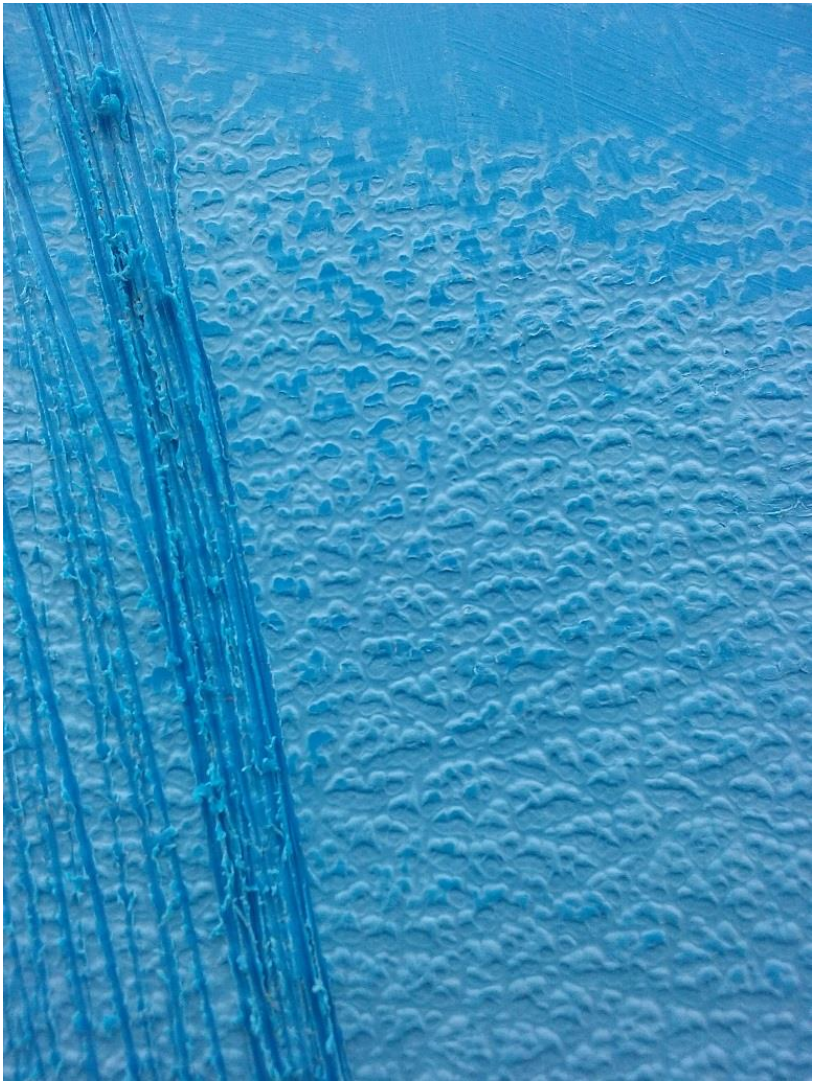
untitled – Teresa Daniele

Teresa Daniele has created various forms of art including music, writing, photography and painting. She lives in London, Ontario.

Stained Downtown — Lincoln McCardle

Lincoln McCardle is everywhere that London is.

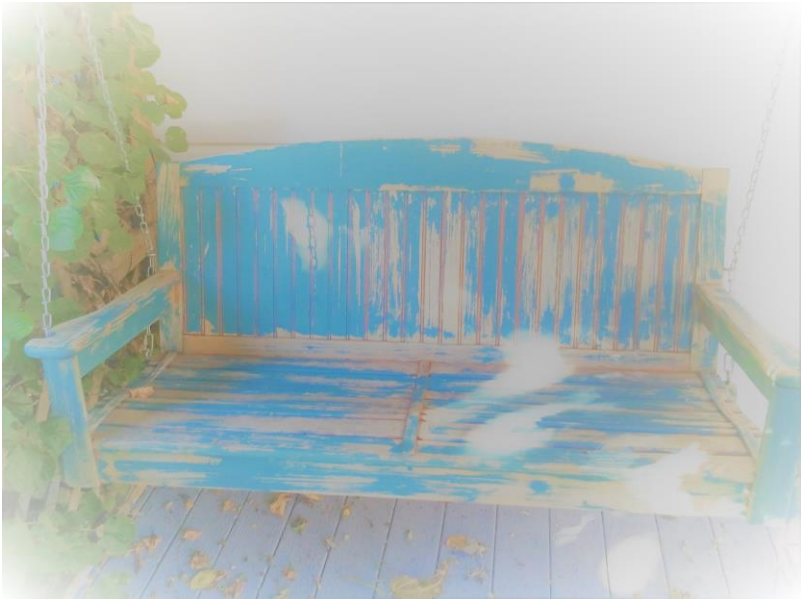
Blue Scrape – Stephenson Muret



Stephenson Muret lives and writes in southern California. His plays, stories, essays and poems have appeared in scores of publications, touching virtually all genres.

Desert Grass After Winter Rain – Stephenson Muret

empty swing – Andreas Gripp



Norma West Linder

Ding, Dong, Dell

My mother had only one sibling. Her name was Ellen. She was the mother of twin boys. Ellen disappeared when I was eleven or twelve. My mother never spoke of her again. Ours was a strange family. Estranged family.

I still have a birthday card Ellen gave me when I was six, saved with other treasures in a wooden cigar box. It's signed "from Auntie Ellen and boys" – even though I never knew her well enough to call her "Auntie". The card has a big pink number 6 on the front. I don't know why I've kept it all these years. We were living in Toronto then, and she and the twins came by train to visit for a few days. The twins were about eight, the same age as my brother. I remember we four kids going out to play, giggling as we all peed in the tall grass behind the shed. It was the first time I was aware of sexual differences. When we went back into the house, my mother was strangely quiet. She seemed angry about something.

Before she passed away at ninety-five, Mother told me Ellen's story. She was abused by the railroad man she'd married at seventeen, but refused to leave him. He was a heavy drinker. When the twins were little, he'd pushed her and she'd fallen down a flight of stairs. "She turned stone deaf – never seemed quite right in the head after that," said my mother. "I learned about it when she visited us years ago. You wouldn't remember her. You were only six

or so at the time. The railroad man was killed in a drunken brawl when their boys were around thirteen. I wanted her and the twins to come and live with us, but she was stubborn. Probably resented me because I'd been dead set against her marriage in the first place. She and the twins went to live with the old lady on her farm up near New Liskeard."

My mother was silent for a time. She always referred to her own mother as "the old lady". She spoke well of her father who had died when she and Ellen were teenagers, but she never had a good word to say about her mother.

"I'm sure the old lady took them in so she'd have cheap labour," my mother continued. "As soon as they were old enough, the boys took off. They never got in touch with anybody in the family again. Can't say I blame them. My sister Ellen disappeared soon after that. We never did find out what happened to her."

My mother fell back on her pillow, exhausted. It was the last conversation we were ever to have.

I met my grandmother, the "old lady", only once. I must have been around twelve. My dad had driven us all the way to New Liskeard from Toronto in the family Ford. After a lunch of pork and beans on toast with my grandmother and her tough-looking old hired hand,

my brother and I went outside to explore. We found a boarded-up well out behind the barn. Our curiosity aroused, my brother and I started to lift one of the boards. We didn't notice the old lady behind us.

"You kids git the hell away from there!" she shrieked. She had a fierce look in her eyes, her white hair flying every which way.

Our mother, who had followed her, took us each by an arm and marched us back to the car. Dad drove us home. We never again visited the farm.

When I was a child, I had a book of nursery rhymes. One was *Ding, dong, dell, Pussy's in the well, Who'll get her out? Little Tommy Stout.*

Whenever I think of Ellen, I think of that rhyme, and I find myself wondering about that boarded-up well.

Norma West Linder is a member of The Writers' Union of Canada, and WITS (Writers International Through Sarnia). Author of 6 novels, 14 collections of poetry, a memoir of Manitoulin Island, two children's books, a biography of Pauline McGibbon, short stories, and published internationally and aired over CBC. For 24 years she taught English at Lambton College in Sarnia. Linder wrote a column for *The Observer* for seven years. Her latest poetry collection, *Two Paths through the Seasons,* with James Deahl, was published in Israel. *The Pastel Planet,* a children's book, was recently released by Hidden Brook Press. Linder's poem *Valediction* was set to music by composer Jeffrey Ryan and performed at a Tafelmusik concert in Toronto in February of 2016. *TallStuff,* a novel, was published by Hidden Brook Press in the Fall of 2016.

Alan Leangvan

Young Once

Those hands were young once.
They knew the feel of wood hugging graphite,
of hot tea burning soft skin through that one favourite mug
and the daily stroll across hairlines when ideas refused
to become words.
They gripped, and wrote,
and grew, and wrote,
and became calloused
but they wrote.
Those eyes were young once.
They sipped oceans of scenery,
watched Time do the job it's so well-known for
and saw every flavour of tear in vibrant colour
albeit a little blurry.

Those Hazelnut windows have seen so much
now they blink a little slower
but they still stare at old books sometimes
and forget to blink altogether.
Those hands are tired today
and those eyes haven't been parched in ages.
Now, calloused hands hold much smaller hands
and blurry eyes watch Time work far too quickly

but a smile forms while sipping tea that's too hot
from that one favourite mug
because those hands were young once
and now
someone else knows the feel of wood hugging graphite.

Born and raised in London, Ontario, **Alan Leangvan** has been writing since 2002. He started writing because of a talent show in 7th grade. Being a smaller kid with a physical disability, sports and other physical activities were impractical and dangerous so he turned to words. A lovely substitute teacher at the time suggested writing. Until then he had never written a poem before. The result was that he won the talent show, getting his work published at 13 years young, and setting him on the path that lead to today. He's recently represented London at poetry slams in Vancouver, Winnipeg, and Guelph and had poetry appear in *Another London : poems from a city still searching for itself* (Harmonia Press, 2016) as well as the first issue of *Synaeresis : arts + poetry.*

Brian Baker

PYA

means INRI,
he knew there were letters
that must go across
this wooden crucifix
he has made, two pieces
of wood and nails and
crayon saviour
looking small, looking
light blue.

Knew there were letters
and picked P and Y and A,
made his own holy tongue
and spoke it onto wood.

He is not as cruel as
spears and thorns
but still makes light
of what's been done,
leaves a laughing messiah
there in the dark, king of a
pile of clothes for charity.

He has lain there for days,
victim of a delayed ascension.

He is PYA,
he is among the monsters,
he is the basement Christ
on two-by-fours.

Beach off Franklin Road

In the summers, through the mountains,
and as it was always meant to be,
the ocean and my brother and I
came together.
Strange how we both chose different tides,
he and the low tide and how
it peeled back the
very beginning of day. Before
the rest of us were up
I would feel him leave and
let him go to the beach without me
where it left bare his and its own world
to explore, alone, together.
My choice, the evening tide
and how my father's smoke rose up from it,
all of us on logs that crushed and murmured
together, some of them water-full,
barely buoyant, above the surface
like icebergs in warm waters.
Their numbers could combine to break you,
my father says, he's seen it happen
but how difficult to resist the temptation
to run from log to log when the ocean
has always been something you went to

and now, at high tide, it comes to *you*,
cleansing the edge of land you thought you'd
left your mark on.
And some of the smallest things you remember
the hardest, the ember tips of cigarettes
reflecting off his glasses in the dark,
the cool evenings of those summers by the sea,
salt water pools and life that looked up at us,
the creosoted steps he'd made
to take us there.

Brian Baker has been a Londoner for the last 52 years. He started writing poetry in 1987 and has been published in the *Windsor Review, Dandelion, The Lyric, The Antigonish Review,* and the debut issue of *Synaeresis: arts + poetry.* He won the 1990 *Forest City Poetry Contest.*

Richard King Perkins II

A Plague of Weary Zealots

It occurred to me the other day
that you might not be real at all —

not necessarily a plague
of weary zealots

but a 3D printed creation
that's learned to pounce, warp
wheedle and jeer.

I have a crazy thought
that maybe I'm impersonating you
at every level

enlivening you with words and feelings
that are simply my own inner reflections

adorned with astrological symbols

filled with grottos of
of herbalogical tomes and broken toys.

Whether you're composed of
illicit stray thoughts
lathered from my body

or made from something more substantial
like indigo and desperation,

you deserve to be told
that however you came to be

I'm here for you

even if you're just
a sad composite of me.

Richard King Perkins II is a state-sponsored advocate for residents in long-term care facilities. He lives in Crystal Lake, Illinois, with his wife, Vickie and daughter, Sage. He is a three-time Pushcart Prize, Best of the Net and Best of the Web nominee whose work has appeared in more than a thousand publications.

M.J. Iuppa

Charade

There's a woman living in your Victorian neighborhood. She's a bit birdy — the way she flutters down her porch steps — her glassy eyes darting, surveying her geography, making sure everything is in its place before she leaves for her walk along the canal. You watch her through lace curtains, wanting her to do something out of the ordinary. She doesn't move — feet planted on the sidewalk, heels together and toes facing equally out to either side. She doesn't blink, but stares at you. *How dare she?* You make a tight fist & tap sharply on the glass. Arms-up, she flies.

M.J. Iuppa is the Director of the Visual and Performing Arts Minor Program and Lecturer in Creative Writing at St. John Fisher College; and since 2000 to present, is a part-time lecturer in Creative Writing at The College at Brockport. Since 1986, she has been a teaching artist, working with students, K-12, in Rochester, New York and surrounding area. In addition to 5 chapbooks, she has three full-length poetry collections, *Small Worlds Floating* (2016), *Within Reach* (2010) – both from Cherry Grove Collections, and *Night Traveler* (Foothills Publishing, 2003). She lives on a small farm in Hamlin, New York.

Sergio A. Ortiz

Collective Madness

> Around the house the flakes fly faster,
> And all the berries now are gone
> – Thomas Harding, *Birds At Winter*

Overexposed driftwood
is what we are.
Bewitched by the light,
pretty little cento,
eclipse enchanted with rainbows.

Our childhood memories linger
like pastoral triolets rolling about meadows.
Luck has nothing to do with interpreting
the veils with which we choose to cover our faces.
Enlightenment happens after we fall.

Madness comes in the form of eyes
appended to blood dripping rocks
when our demons fail to cross the river.
Never is where we usually drink tea
and endlessly suck on lemons.
Smiles are inevitable
when we spar with strangers.

Silent

A chorus of genuflections filtered through
the kitchen ventilator and knelt beside my bed
around midnight. I knew Georgina was dead.
My rocking chair peeled
its mahogany finish in her honor.

There were loud knocks at the door. Neighbors
packing axioms, guns, crucifixes, shovels.
“Hi, we were wondering about the odor?”

It’s not coming from here, I’m not dead.
Occasionally, I see apparitions of myself
standing by the window, behind the shower curtain,
but I still go fly fishing.

Mother came to me in a dream last night, gave me the password
to a house where boas reincarnate into possessed lizards
snapping at mosquitoes on maracas. She said,
everything spoken becomes water.

I am going to stop talking for seven years,
but first let me repeat this a few more
times:

Harmonizing the sacred Harmonizing the sacred
Harmonizing the sacred

Sanctus
Sanctus
Sanctus

Sergio A. Ortiz is a Puerto Rican poet and the founding editor of *Undertow Tanka Review.* He is a two-time Pushcart nominee, a four-time Best of the Web nominee, and 2016 Best of the Net nominee. He placed 2nd in the 2016 Ramón Ataz annual poetry competition, sponsored by Alaire Publishing House. He is currently working on his first full-length collection of poems, *Elephant Graveyard.* He lives in San Juan.

Marcia Arrieta

Here and There

I contemplate
fire
and imagine bears.

The story is an old one
never spoken.

Please do not tell me
to recall the phoenix —
you who told me
a leaf doesn't matter.

I analyze the dust between
valor and repose.
Unacknowledged trees
listen to the city traffic.

We are wrapped
in newspaper.
The snow howls.

Marcia Arrieta lives on the canyon in Pasadena, California. Her work appears in *Barrow Street*, *Osiris, Shuf*, *Eratio*, *Clockwise Cat*, *Posit, Wicked Alice*, and *Web Conjunctions*. She is the author of two poetry collections: *archipelago counterpoint* (BlazeVOX) & *triskelion, tiger moth, tangram, thyme* (Otoliths). She edits and publishes *Indefinite Space*, a poetry/art journal.

Debbie Okun Hill

After Watching the Seventh Season of *Bones* on Netflix

Graphic images on TV screen
deaden my taste and common sense.

On couch-coffin, I settle like a corpse
thoughts dissected by forensic dialogue
and a plot line cliff that leaves me hanging
yearning to fast-forward-time-travel
to the next season's first episode.

Some people harbour bones in their closets.

My memories are spineless
hanging limp
like ill-fitting clothes
on a rusty hanger.

Safety first.

I prefer fictional mysteries
found in library books
sleuthing challenges
from a safe distance.

Cheering and crying
for TV characters
a reality break
leaves me haunted
by *Bones*, its studio props,
and the serial madness
of twisted evidence.

Debbie Okun Hill is a Canadian poet/blogger and an Ontario Arts Council Writers Reserve grant recipient. To date, over 350 of her poems have appeared in such publications as *Descant, Existere, The Literary Review of Canada, Vallum, The Windsor Review* and *Other Voices* in Canada plus *MOBIUS, Philadelphia Poets, The Binnacle*, and *Thema* in the United States. *Tarnished Trophies* (Black Moss Press, 2014) is her first book of poetry. In July 2017, Big Pond Rumours Press will publish *Drawing From Experience*, her art-themed poetry manuscript which recently received a runner-up award in Big Pond Rumours 1st Chapbook Contest. She currently gardens words full-time in rural southwestern Ontario.

Spartan – Joseph S. Pete

Bulldog – Joseph S. Pete

Urban Decay – Joseph S. Pete

Street Art – Joseph S. Pete

Joseph S. Pete is a photographer, an award-winning journalist, an Iraq War veteran, an Indiana University graduate, a book reviewer, and a frequent guest on Lakeshore Public Radio in Merrillville. He was named the poet laureate of Chicago BaconFest 2016, a feat that Geoffrey Chaucer never accomplished. His work has appeared in *The Five-Two, Chicago Literati, Dogzplot, shufPoetry, The Roaring Muse, Blue Collar Review, Lumpen, McSweeney's Internet Tendency, Pulp Modern, Zero Dark Thirty* and elsewhere. He once Googled the Iowa Writers' Workshop.

Synaeresis : arts + poetry will be on Summer hiatus following the publication of the 2nd issue in April, 2017. As a result of this and due to a personal relocation out of London, I'm unable to accept further submissions. If there are future issues of the magazine, a formal call will be made on the Synaeresis website:

http://synaeresismagazine.blogspot.ca

Thank you all and best wishes for your creative endeavours.

Andreas Gripp
editor, *Synaeresis: arts + poetry*

Emily Bowles

Bird Made of Metal/Alchemy

Isis the alchemist has transformed me:
silver spinner, golden-limbed adhesion,
what's broken becomes metallic, spidery
veins of ore tracing a map of lesions.

What he left behind was not fit for a
bennu bird's birth. Those ashes smoldering
deadened where they should have sparkled, mica
fooling everyone with its shimmering.

Those bones bent against glass, metal, and dust.
My bones, I forgot when I gathered his,
seeking coherence, meaning. We discussed
how to hold her by her wings, the ibis.

Writing you, I needed Toth, a stylus.
Not to be feathered, flayed, tied by a truss.

Bird, Not a Baby

A baby bird should not fumble on flightless wings like this. It will be trapped under the heavy weight of water, in a basement where the washing machine drains into a hole unfit for life, where there's no sunshine and not even the smallest tree branch to cling to. The mother upstairs with her nursing baby didn't know what to do. She mourned for the other mother, the original ornithological one. She waited for her husband to put down his books, pick up a trash bag, dispose of the child. I mean chick.

delicate, wingspan
unfeathered—transparent skin
swaddling such small bones

Emily Bowles is a writer in Wisconsin who has published her poetry in *Page & Spine, Word Curd, The Road Not Taken, The Scene,* and the forthcoming Wisconsin Fellowship of Poet's 2018 Calendar.

Nina Svenne

This Sobbing Song

I wrote in my childhood days:
tiny snow white I was please don’t pull my dress
Bergman or Borkman's daughter or was it his son
I was was it mother who took me into the mine the ore
rang the first time I heard a hammer pecking at the stone
it was the bells of midnight the ore I am the notch while
it lasts wrinkling and smoothing the gold was leaping
blowing up the skull bang and back to egg I went
had to lie under the pile waiting I became a berg
a bird of cold stone

Nina Svenne is a student of creative writing in Tromso, Norway. She lives in Oslo.

Lisa Young

The Good Old Days

the news is bad and seeps
through our windows at night

as if our complaints feed the reel
relentless as dust balls

no one has swept for weeks
we've been piling our clothes

high on the bedroom trunk
my confidence is slipping

through the halls
our cats gallop and hiss

traumatized by the new rescue dog
angling for his seventh walk

dinner is late tonight
frozen chicken sticks tasting of fish

only the wine is bloody good
cloudbursts when I want a smoke

bitter in my winter coat
seeking shelter on the back deck

under the small lip of an eavestrough
the cigarette ash lengthening

a match for this overcast sky

Lisa Young is the author of the poetry collection, *When the Earth* (Quattro Books) and the chapbook, *This Cabin* (Lyricalmyrical Press).

Farrukh Chishtie

Rays' Reasons

Weary blurs
wiped clear;
cherry blooms
pull near:

Focusing deep;
harmony lulls
hypnotic sleep.
Stillness falls;

Rising shoots,
sing binaural:
nascent telos-
-busting floréal.

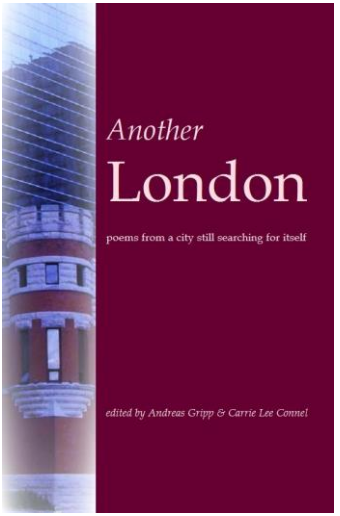
Sun beckons
passage tilting;
Rays' reasons
liltingly lifting …

Farrukh Chishtie is a poet and writer presently based in Islamabad, Pakistan. He is the editor of the environmental magazine, *Subh-e-Nau Monthly.* His first book of poems, *Snowflake Sleep,* was published in 2016 by Harmonia Press.

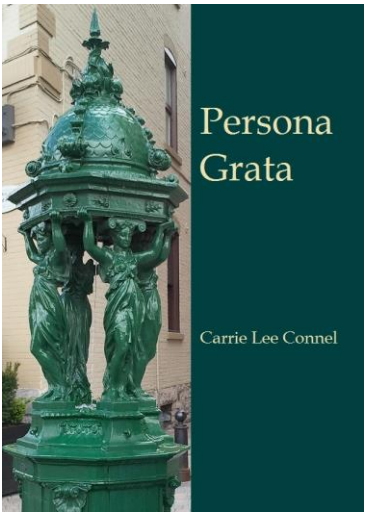
Rays' Reasons – Farrukh Chishtie

Rose – Farrukh Chishtie

P O E T R Y from Harmonia Press

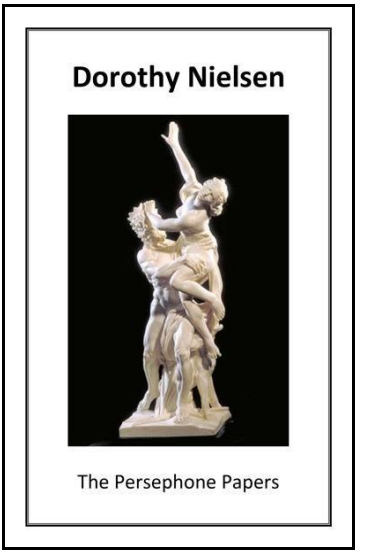


Another London – various authors



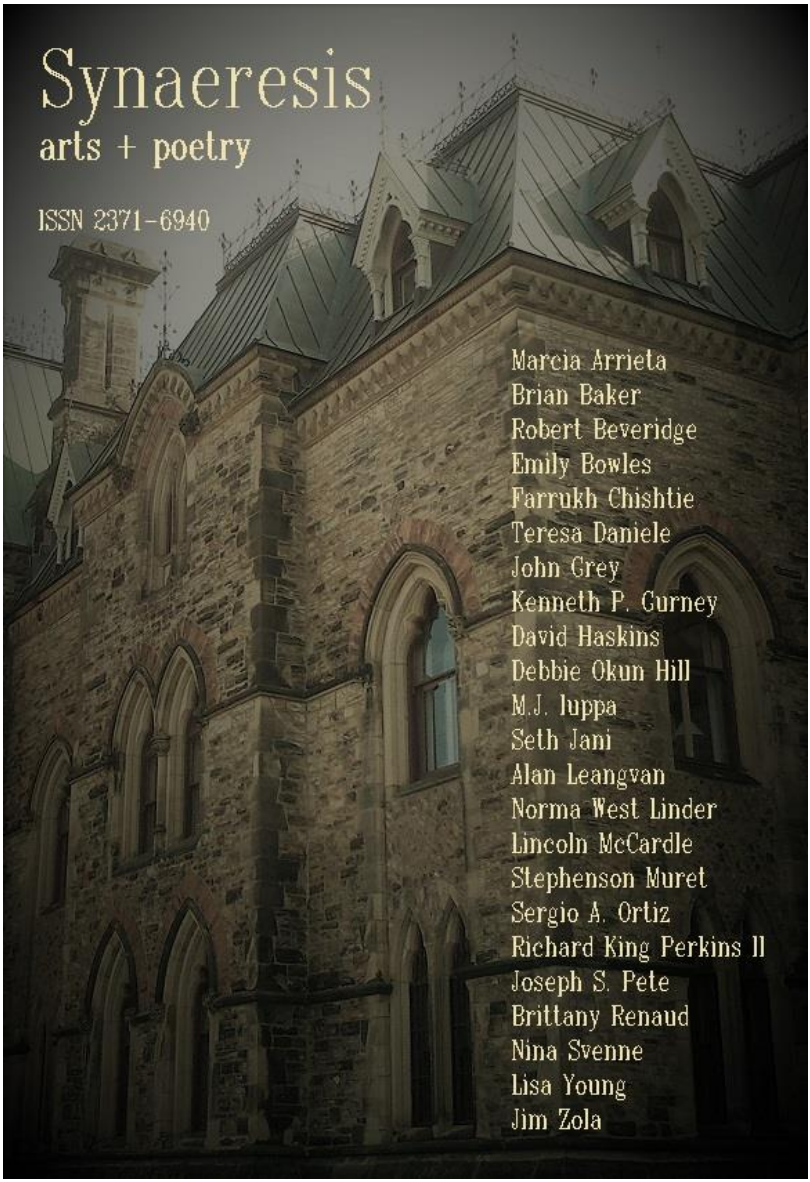
Persona Grata by Carrie Lee Connel

Snowflake Sleep by Farrukh Chishtie



Persephone Papers - Dorothy Nielsen

Available at harmoniapress.blogspot.com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